



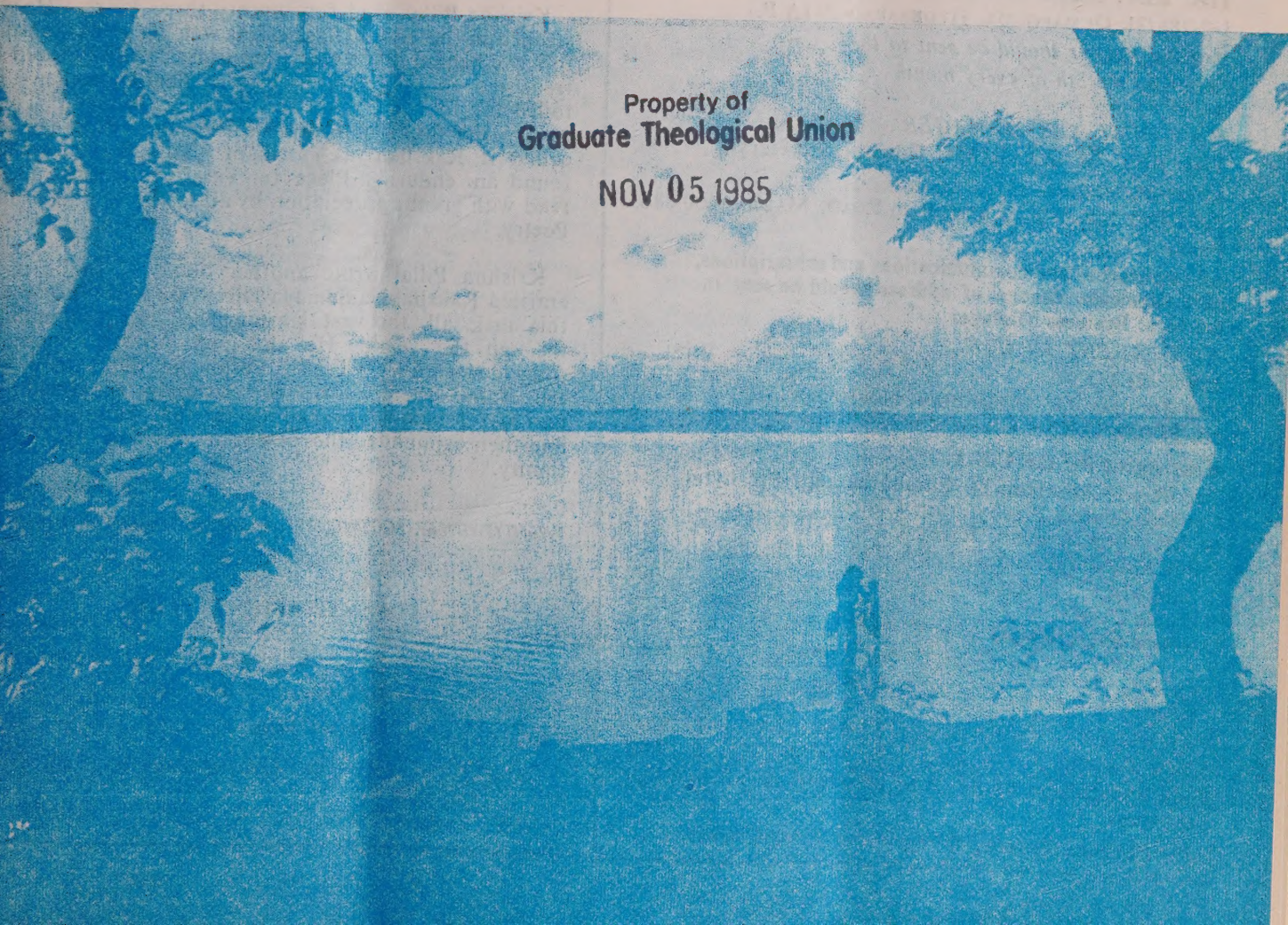
The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● AUGUST 1985

Property of
Graduate Theological Union

NOV 05 1985



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Opinions expressed by contributors do not commit the C.S.I.

25 Years Ago

Krishna Pillai wrote another book in Tamil prose entitled *Rakshaniya Samaya Nirnayam*. He brought to this task all the vast learning he had accumulated through the years. He also put into the book his deep devotion to Christ. Following the example of the Tamil theologians, he critically examined the various religions prevailing in the Tamil Country and then expounded the essential doctrines of Christianity.

—Churchman 195

TWENTYFIVEYEARSAGOTWENTYFIVEYEARSAGOTWENTYFIVEYEARSAG

Less than Quarter Page Rs. 40

Literature and Society



Literature and Society keep on revitalizing each other because they are linked up through the powerful medium of man. The strange feature in this phenomenon is that both literature and society play a prominent part in shaping each other. Society provides material for literature and literature formed out of this material tries to reform and revitalize the society. Thus literature not only analyses society but occasionally provides guidance and puts society on the right path.

Literature is not a thing; not an article nor a book. It is essentially a pursuit, a pursuit undertaken by the human spirit, a pursuit of truth and beauty and fullness of life. In every human community, no matter how primitive or prehistoric, there is a longing for beauty and truth and search for eternal values even though it may not go much further than a folk song or a folk tale or a proverb handed down from generation to generation. It has to be pursued with all the resources of the human spirit—with imagination and intuition, with intellect and conscience. Generally speaking this was the goal of the writers and the publishing houses of yester years, which is sadly missing today. It is estimated that nearly 100 books are published everyday in various Indian languages. But certainly it is not the quantity that counts. It is the creative response to the impulse of the day that matters. Writers who draw inspiration from the humdrum lives of the simple, common people can respond to the life situation better and communicate meaningfully.

We must be clear about one thing. Literature on its own strength cannot transform society in

our country. The present state of illiteracy excludes about 70% of the people from participation in the literary scene as readers. The writer whether 'Committed', or 'Progressive' or even religious escapes criticism and misses appreciation from the bulk of the people. Literacy must spread far and wide if literature is to continue to play its role as an integrating force in the nation. It should be possible to change this picture by enabling the largest number of persons to read what is being published. Other mass media are bound to expand their areas of influence, but it is doubtful if they would ever be able to replace the written word.

There is no doubt within its limited readership Indian writing in the last two decades has helped the process of national integration. This was possible because of English, 'the link language'. English occupies a privileged position in India even today, not only because of the historical conditions but also because of its flexibility. This makes it possible to be a medium of expression and a vehicle to communicate to the different regions. Of course one can question what kind of society the writers have been portraying and whether the experience embodied in their works is authentically Indian or not. Otherwise English has provided a common platform for a multi-lingual country like ours to express and share our experience and sensibility. Although we realize the importance of English which cannot be dismissed as a foreign language, due recognition, status and publicity should be given to the works of the other regional languages. It is one of the ironies of the Indian literary situation that a

reader in Tamil or Telugu has greater chance of knowing more of Greek or German literature than of Malayalam or Kannada literature. The former available to him in English. A very few, a negligible number of books of regional languages are translated into other languages. If this is the situation, it is not possible to bring people closer to the literature which is being written for them and create a sense of awareness in them. Today most of the publishing houses are in the hands of a few elitistic, sophisticated and rich groups who, by and large, have little or no concern for the welfare of the society. Their interests are different. Media are weapons for them, mostly used to fight political battles. This means the publishing houses which are 'free'—policy-wise, should struggle hard to save the

fundamental democratic values, withstanding the onslaught of communal and feudal forces which are actively engaged. To accomplish this objective publishing houses should muster the support of creative writers. Many writers are angry and frustrated not only because of the failure of programmes envisaged by publishing houses but also because of limited or often no support they get from publishing houses. The strength of any publishing house is writer or a panel of writers who play a creative role in letting literature and society dynamic and actively participating in the harmonious development of man. The publishing houses must keep their eyes firmly fixed on the goal and push steadily forward.

—DASS BABU..

All India Christian Editor's Workshop

An important All India Theological Workshop for editors of Christian periodicals and diocesan magazines is being planned to be held on 19-23 September 1985 at Dhyana Ashram, Madras. The theme will be 'Christian Periodicals in the Mission of the Church in India'. The objective of this major workshop would be to critically examine the present situation of Christian journalism in relation to the ecumenical commitment of Christian communication within the mission and evangelistic task of the Church in India. It will endeavour to sensitise the editors to this challenge and enable them to initiate search for new awareness, insights and guidelines for Christian journalism. The workshop will also aim towards forming an association of editors of Christian periodicals in India. It is being organised under the auspices of the Programme Unit I of the National Council of Churches in India, National

Association for Christian Communication and the Board of Theological Education, Senate of Serampore College with assistance from World Association for Christian Communication and Programme on Theological Education, World Council of Churches.

The editors of Christian periodicals, diocesan and church magazines in various regional languages of India are invited to attend this workshop. For further information and blank application forms, please write to :

THE REV. DASS BABU

Director

Communication Department

Church of South India

1-2-288/31, Domalguda

Hyderabad-500 029 A.P.

W

Perspectives for Innovation in School Education

DR. W. A. F. HOPPER*

The CSI Council of Education under the able and scholarly leadership of Rt. Rev. (Dr.) P. Victor Premasagar has recently launched a programme to rethink the Education Ministry of the Church. School Education is the focus for the present. After gaining deeper insights into this area of education, it is hoped to move on to College Education and Professional Education.

1.0 Background Information :

Selected Managers and Heads of our Diocese Schools, committed teachers and others involved in School Education from the Church spent three days at Ooty (14-5-1984 to 17-5-1984) to ponder over the priorities set before them by God himself who had called them to serve. At Ooty it was decided to organise regional conferences to involve more educationists into this process of rethinking and reflecting. Accordingly, regional conferences were held at Hyderabad, Mysore, Kottayam and Vellore.

During these conferences once again the question was asked: 'Should the Church run Schools?' This was asked in the context of schools, receiving grants and salaries of teachers from Government, following syllabus and textbooks prescribed by Government and sending students for External examinations conducted by statutory or government bodies. It was observed that unknowingly, a large majority of our diocesan schools (both secondary and higher secondary) over a period of time, have become just institutions offering jobs for a few persons and teaching children so that a large number of them (aim:100%) passed in the external examinations at the end of 10 years and 12 years of schooling respectively. The primary and middle schools run by our Dioceses also seem to function as one of the stream schools.

During one of the Bible Studies, it has revealed that in the incarnation event of our Lord Jesus Christ one of the most striking happenings was that *space could be found where space was not available*. Therefore, the original question was modified as: 'Is it possible for our schools to function as pioneers and pace-setters rather than mere followers within the framework of an overall educational system and pattern of external examinations?'. The appropriate Bible studies conducted

by Bishops and Presbyters and discussions led by the author of this article helped to open the eyes of the participants at the conferences towards immense possibilities. It was also felt that there was an urgent need to identify bold teachers with a new vision to launch into innovations after thoughtful planning at diocese, church and institutional levels.

2.0 Biblical Basis :

The Word of God projects at least five dimensions of Educational conceived as development. They are the following :

- 2.1 'Education as a process, involving God and people as co-workers'
(I Corinth. 3:9 ; 15:9-10)
- 2.2 'Education as a process of obeying the law and authority'
(Deut. 7:11, 11:27 ; Josh. 24:24 ; Acts. 5:29 ; Col. 3:20 ; Acts. 26:19)
- 2.3 'Education as a process of transformation of the mind'
(Rom. 12:1-2)
- 2.4 'Education as a process of liberation from bondage'
(I Corinth 20:22 ; Rom. 6:18, 7:6, 8:15 ; Gal. 3:24, 4:10)
- 2.5 'Education as a process of attaining Values'
(II Corinth. 4:8-18 ; I Thes. 5:14)

All the above-mentioned aspects could be summarised as 'Education for life'. To fulfil that, schools ought to be training grounds for life rather than mere coaching places for external examinations. For that purpose, schools may have to demolish the high walls built around them. Recent publications with the provocative titles, 'Schools without Walls,' 'Deschooling and Pedagogy of the Oppressed' have provoked many to do hard thinking in this direction. If the man-made barriers are broken, the school would get exposed to the life outside. The head, teachers and children ought to be well equipped to meet the demands made on them by the outside community. Needless to mention that the school should be able to resist the evil forces. Of course it is 'safe' to live in an ivory tower. But, then, what is the call of the Gospel ?

* Dr. W. A. F. Hopper is a Professor in the National Council of Educational Research & Training, an autonomous body in the Union Ministry of Education, Government of India and is serving as Field Adviser, NCERT, based at Madras. His main area of specialisation is School Biology Education.

3.0 Possible Directions of Movement :

An attempt is made to project the directions in which diocesan schools may move in order to become effective institutions to creatively transform the education ministry of the church on Biblical basis as outlined above.

3.1 From Syllabus to Curriculum :

The syllabus is prescribed by the government and nationalised textbooks are written for the various classes. The external examinations at the end of class X and XII are based upon the prescribed syllabus and textbooks. A teacher who rigidly follows the syllabus and textbooks for a class very often becomes a mere reader of lessons. Depending upon the subject he handles, he becomes a 'Reader in History' or 'Reader in Science' and so on. His main job is to tell and the task imposed on the children is to take down what is told. Nearer examinations, children are pushed into the process of remembering and rehearsing. (Ofcourse, information stored in the STM needs constant rehearsals for easy and speedy retrieval).

What happens in the class-room is described as 'Curriculum in transaction'. If that is so, what ought to happen in a class-room or outside it when a particular subject is taught to children could be planned as well. Curriculum developers have been able to design and produce a gamut of curriculum materials for teachers and students so that learning, by and large, takes place in desirable directions towards predetermined goals. Recent advances in educational technology have made it possible to adopt a multi-media approach as a delivery system for the presentation of curriculum materials. However, the printed word is going to be the permanent media for the reach of the masses for a long time to come.

Need-based curriculum materials could be developed at diocese levels for adaptation (not for adoption) taking into consideration local-specific conditions at the institutions. The curriculum could be designed to achieve high-order mental abilities so that learners eventually develop 'analytical minds'. This should be coupled with the development of an attitude to receive the innovations, which may be described as an 'open mind'.

The major trends in the movement from syllabus concept to curriculum concept are depicted below :

Syllabus Concept	→	Curriculum Concept
(i) Remembering and Rehearing	→	Being and becoming
(ii) Lower level mental abilities	→	Higher level mental abilities
(iii) Answering questions	→	Questioning the answers
(iv) Learning conceived as a destination	→	Learning conceived as a journey
(v) Closed mind	→	Open mind
(vi) Teacher as a Guard	→	Teacher as a Guide

3.2 From Passive Methodology to Creative Methodology :

'Being and Becoming' as indicated in the pictogram earlier could be considered as the main foundations for a Christian to live 'here and now' and to live 'there and then'. As Paul says we are new creations in Christ. Many Christians feel satisfied if they get the new experience of being born again but forget that they are just babes drinking milk and not able to digest harder stuff. Christians are challenged by the Gospel to become more and more like Christ in all aspects of his personal holiness and compassion for others.

As educators many have chosen to remain as babes practising passive methodologies in classrooms. As a starter, perhaps passive methodology is necessity. Why should a Christian teacher adopt creative methodologies? God has given us children to our care so that we may be co-workers with him to initiate them into the process of 'being and becoming like Christ'. Diocesan schools would then become training grounds for life.

How could it be done in teaching secular subjects like the sciences, history and languages? Each one of the disciplines had a 'being status' but now it has come to a 'becoming state'. The becoming state is a dynamic one unlike the being state which is static. As a biology teacher—educator, I have been witnessing the phenomenal growth of my discipline specially during the last two decades with the discovery of DNA in molecular biology. Genetic engineering technologies have great expectations to solve the problem of curing gene-linked disorders in the human. When the science disciplines have been evolving rapidly adopting creative approaches for their growth, what a sad spectacle to watch when our science educators adopt out-moded passive methodologies for teaching science to young and energetic children living in the present space age?

In a class room situation or outside it, the Christian teacher may have to evolve appropriate teaching—learning strategies using creative methodologies. The scope of the present article does not permit the writer to delineate the different methodologies leading to creativity in the learners. However, the major trends in the movement from passive methodology to creative methodology are indicated below :

Passive Methodology	→	Creative Methodology
(i) Textual	→	Contextual
(ii) Covering	→	Uncovering
(iii) Receiving	→	Interacting
(iv) Filling in	→	Drawing out
(v) Superficiality	→	Mastery
(vi) Convergent thinking	→	Divergent thinking
(vii) Competition	→	Cooperation

3.3 From Summative Evaluation to Formative Evaluation

By and large, summative evaluation is done in schools through quarterly, half-yearly and annual examinations. 'Pass and fail' are declared at the

end, on the basis of the level of performance of the students' in the examinations. When the list of 'failed students' are put-up in a school, sometimes it leads to grave consequences in the lives of a few children. Parents too get a shock as they are told all of a sudden that their children have failed in the examinations, and therefore they are detained in the same class. In some of the schools, parents are asked to take TC (Transfer Certificate) and go away.

The thrust of the gospel seems to be in the direction of trying your best to help people so that they do not perish (Matt. 18:14; II Peter 3:9; John 10:28). As a Master Educator, the Lord Jesus Christ condemned sin in very strong terms but had great compassion on the human sinner and adopted various approaches to save him so that he realises his sin, repents for it and develops in the right direction with the help of the Holy Spirit. If that is so, what about the precious souls studying in our Diocesan Schools? Is there a way out so that many more could be saved from damnation?

If specific outcomes of learning for every topic in a subject are kept as goals for the learners and if the learners are helped to attain predetermined mastery levels, there is no doubt learning will take place in an effective manner. Then the role of the educator would be to develop a scheme of development-oriented evaluation (formative evaluation) so that each child is helped to develop to the maximum extent possible in terms of outcomes of learning in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. In a scheme of formative evaluation an effective system of feed-back and monitoring will have to be conceived of, so that

maximal outcomes of learning are ensured in the group. Needless to mention that action research has to be done in selected schools to implement a feasible model of formative evaluation.

The major trends in the movement from summative evaluation to formative evaluation are indicated below :

Summative Evaluation	→	Formative Evaluation
(i) Generally norm referenced	→	Criterion referenced
(ii) end-on examination	→	continuous assessment
(iii) external evaluation techniques	→	inbuilt evaluation techniques
(iv) focus on cumulative learning	→	focus on attainment of periodic mastery learning levels
(v) very rigid	→	highly flexible

4.0 Conclusion :

The present article is conceptual in nature and it is meant to stimulate thinkings in the minds of educators and those involved in one way or other with Diocesan Schools. In future, it is hoped that work-shops would be planned for committed and innovative-minded teachers so that they are trained in specific areas to develop competencies and confidence to translate the conceptual framework into action at schools and in the community which they are called upon to serve.

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Captivities of People in Asia*

Amos 5:24; 8:4-8; Luke 13:10-17.

In post-colonial Asia many people are still in bondage to poverty, structural injustice and discrimination on the basis of class, race and sex.

Poverty is the lot of many of Asia's teeming millions. It is endemic in Asia although islands of affluence exist here and there. For the poor daily life is almost a never-ending and oftentimes losing struggle merely to survive. The finer aspects of life such as leisure time, enjoyment of the arts, college education, etc., are beyond their reach.

Why are people poor? A moralistic point of view attributes that to one's defective character—laziness. 'A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich' (Prov. 10:4). Poverty cannot be blamed on external circumstances alone. The same could be said about affluence. Much would depend upon a person's attitudes towards work and ingenuity. One has the option, as it were, of improving his/her lot.

One religious view regards poverty as a divine curse arising out of one's being irreverent and disloyal to God. This is the case with success-oriented popular piety. A religious devotee performs his/her religious obligations with the belief that the gods will reward the faithful with success and riches. Poverty is thought to result from failure to live up to such obligations.

There is, however, a *more basic* cause of poverty. To a considerable extent, poverty is due to unjust conditions in society over which the poor have no control. (This is not to say that laziness may not be a contributory cause.) The rich and powerful create structures of human relationships that serve to protect their vested interests and deny the poor access to scarce resources. In the days of the prophet Amos the rich sold the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes. They trampled the head of the poor into the dust of the earth. They hated what was good and loved evil. The established injustice at the temple gates. The situation in Asia today is not much different from that in the days of Amos. People are poor in our societies because of unjust, oppressive and exploitative social, economic and political institutions. Only to a limited degree may it be said that the poor are poor because they are lazy.

However, Christ says that the poor are happy (Luke 6:20). Does this mean that Christ takes poverty lightly? Does He glorify it, or make it an end in itself? What this saying seems to suggest is that Christ takes the world's order of values and turns it upside down. To the rich Christ would say, 'You spend all your time and energies acquiring the things the world values most. You will get them, But that is all you will have—nothing more.' In contrast, he would say to the poor, 'You are relatively free from attachment to the world's riches. You are better off, because this makes you more open to the Kingdom values of mercy, justice and freedom.' But if this openness is to be an openness in love and freedom, it must happen under conditions of fullness of life. This is in keeping with God's will.

* These Bible Studies were prepared for the Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia.

The struggle of the poor to be free from bondage to poverty is a sign that in the Kingdom, people, not things, matter most. Their situation of deep need places them in a position to be more sensitive and responsive to God's work of loving people for their own sake. It is in this sense that Kingdom of God belongs to the poor. Hence their happiness.

In many parts of Asia today, there are age-old traditions that deprive people of their right to a full human life. One calls to mind the caste system which treats people as objects, not as human beings created in God's image. The tragic plight of the *Harijans* of India and the *Burakus* of Japan are grim reminders of how society and sometimes religion dehumanize people.

Ethnic minorities have been kept at the fringes of their societies. They have been denied access to rights and privileges enjoyed by dominant groups who control the mainstream of community life. Prejudiced and stereotyped images about them reinforce unfair and inhuman practices against which they have to struggle.

In some instances, tribal groups have been deprived of their ancestral lands to make room for powerful profit-making ventures of the advanced sections of society. The effect is disastrous. Not only do these people experience economic hardships, they also their sense of identity which is inseparably linked to their ancestral lands. For example, this has been the case of some ethnic minorities in the Philippines and of the *Aborigines* in Australia.

In general, women in Asia have been discriminated against. 'Bent over' like the woman whom Jesus healed (Luke 13:10-17), they have been conditioned to accept discriminatory attitudes and practices as something inevitable and necessary. From the inferior status forced on them, they could develop only a distorted perception of their rightful place in society.

In healing the woman Jesus not only met her health needs but also challenged conditions that oppressed her. The rulers of the synagogue criticized Jesus not for healing the woman but for doing that on a Sabbath day. It was impossible for them to relate to the woman in a humane way as Jesus did. The reason was that they regarded rules on keeping the Sabbath as more important than responding to a person in need. They were imprisoned in their rigid religious legalism.

But Jesus exposed their faulty reasoning. If by Jewish law it was permissible for one to rescue an ox on a sabbath day, then by same token they should do the same for person in distress. So Jesus laid his hands on her. Immediately she was healed—'made straight'. By that act Jesus bestowed on her a sense of personal worth, dignity and status.

Freeing Asian women from their many bondages needs the concerted effort of men and women alike. This is an important task made necessary by the Biblical understanding of men and women. For, from the perspective of the Kingdom women and men are equal, for God conferred on them equal worth and dignity. In Christ 'there is neither Jew nor Greek,

there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female' (Gal. 3:28).

Equality of the sexes is something everyone possesses by right. It is not something man confers upon woman as a matter of concession.

Questions :

- (1) What, in your opinion, is the relation between your spiritual life and your social responsibility?
- (2) In the light of widespread poverty in Asia, and

considering that God stands in solidarity with the poor, what would be the message the church has for rich and powerful people?

- (3) What are some of the concrete and effective ways the churches in Asia may use in their struggle against oppressive conditions in society?
- (4) What are some of the customs, attitudes and practices which discriminate against women in the various countries in Asia? How can women be freed from such bondage in order that they may take their rightful place in church and society?

Bible Study IV

Security and Freedom

I Samuel 8:4-22

The demand of the Israelites for a king to rule over them was related to their security needs. They were surrounded by a good number of nations, many of whom were hostile to them. Quite likely, they saw that under a monarchical form of government those nations were fairly successful in forging national unity, in promoting the general wellbeing of the people, and in defending their territorial integrity. Following their example the Israelites demanded that they, too, should have a king to rule over them. That demand displeased God and Samuel. A monarchy would mean an end to theocracy, that is, direct government by God through divinely appointed prophets and priests. A monarchy was seen as a rejection of God, and would 'secularize' Israel's political life, as it were. There is scant evidence in I Samuel 8:4-22 to suggest that God and the prophet Samuel opposed the peoples' desire for a stable government that would guarantee their security as a people. The objection centered round the way of attaining that end. A monarchy would, in the long run, bring about real threats to Israel's security from within. Verses 11-18 mention such dangers in a very vivid manner. Two of them are worth noting.

- (1) In a monarchy, a king will exercise strict control over the lives of the people. Young and able men will be drafted into the military or for war-oriented but non-productive economic activities. Young women will also be pressed into service mostly in menial tasks as perfumers of the king, cooks and bakers. The king will requisition choice lands, farm produce and work animals. He will exact a heavy tribute from the people. Worst of all, the people will lose their freedom. The king will make them his slaves. The warning fell on deaf ears. The people insisted on having a king as ruler (v. 19).

Security is a burning issue in many Asian countries. As in the days of Samuel, the belief is that a strong, centralized government is necessary to hold a country together, mobilize human and natural resources to cope with internal and external threats, and ensure the wellbeing of all. These are worthy goals. But in the process, the people may have to pay a very high price. As in the days of Samuel, placing vast

powers in the hands of a strongman and his few associates, means that people have to relinquish their right to participate in the task of making decisions that affect their lives. Decisions made by a few at the top and imposed upon the people will make a fair hearing of the peoples' views very difficult. A lack of 'dialogue' between leaders and followers will most likely create a climate of misunderstanding and distrust. Sooner or later, a government may find it difficult to lead a frustrated populace. To stay in power, it may even have to resort to repressive measures. Security could mean the right of the state to safeguard itself against perceived or imagined threats from the people it is supposed to serve. That situation will be ironic because it would mean that the government has failed to bring about the hoped-for security and general wellbeing of people despite making them pay a high price. Samuel's warning to the people seems to suggest that possibility.

- (2) As in a monarchy, an authoritarian form of government increases the possibility of power being used in an irresponsible manner. In a theocracy, priests and prophets were accountable to God. The king Israel wanted would be accountable only to himself. That will sow the seeds of corruption. As has been said, 'power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'.

An authoritarian leader can choose to listen only to himself and to fawning 'advisers'. That will give him a distorted understanding of his people. The problem would be compounded if he decides arbitrarily what is good for the public as well as how it is to be attained. For instance, this could take place in such sensitive areas as education, mass communication and the conduct of the military.

Education could become a tool for training technocrats conditioned to lead in an authoritarian manner. Curricular offerings could be tinkered with in order to de-emphasize disciplines that prepare people to think critically and

independently. Truth will have to be sacrificed in favour of an ideology that the state wants to impose upon the people. Academic freedom will be curtailed if that hinders the schemes for forging a contrived public consensus.

The handling of information will be controlled. Reporting of events and their interpretation will become selective and slanted. Instead of functioning as a voice of public opinion, the mass media will become a propaganda arm of those in power. Conformity to officially sanctioned opinion then becomes the measure of truth. Dissent is stifled. Correctness in dogma, not a relentless pursuit after truth, will be extolled as a virtue.

The military establishment will assume a widespread and decisive role in organizing human relationships. Its vast coercive powers could be used by the state to suppress peoples' movements. If they want to, men in uniform could act as police and judge and treat people in a high-handed manner. It will be difficult for people to seek redress for their legitimate grievances.

Ideally, freedom and security should go together.

And security should serve freedom, not the other way around. There are situations in which people will have to decide the extent to which freedom of individuals will have to be limited in order to ensure the good of all. There are also situations in which it is necessary for people to choose freedom over security, particularly when the latter is used to advance the good of a privileged few.

Questions :

- (1) It has been said that a participatory way of using power is an inefficient and ineffective way of governing a country. Hence, so the argument goes, the need for centralizing power in the hands of a few. Can a non-participatory form of government be justified from a Christian perspective?
- (2) Is it possible to have national security as well as freedom? If so, how? If not, why not?
- (3) What are some of the ways of setting up effective and efficient form of government that is also accountable to the people?



Mr. James E. Balraj—60 Years Young!



Mr. James Balraj seen with Bishop Thangamuthu Chairman of the Council, and Mrs. Jasmine Balraj, his wife.

4th May 1985 was a red letter day in the life of Mr. James E. Balraj, Executive Director of CSI CTVT when he celebrated his Sashti Poorthi. The CTVT members celebrated this joyous occasion on a grand scale, inviting representatives from the Church of South India.

Mr. Balraj with dedication and commitment to His call, one with immense perseverance to meet any challenge and a person with a large heart, is just starting his successful second innings in his life. Young in looks and a roaring laugh he is willing to accept more responsibilities in the

challenging ministry of striving for the most deprived sections in society.

A man with a lot of irons in the fire, it is surprising how he gives best to his various fields of activities.

God has showered his choicest blessings on Mr. Balraj and we pray that he will continue to do so immensely. May our good Lord continue to guide him and uphold him in all his endeavours.

—Editor

'Pastor, Woman, Mother'

MRS. KATHRIN HESS

[This item appeared in the April-May issue of the Swiss church magazine *Terre Nouvelle*. It was translated from the French by the WCC language service. Hess lives in Locarno in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland.]

'Pastor—Woman—Mother': Those three words are engraved on the back of a brooch given me by one of our parishioners. To be those three persons and have those three roles is not as easy a matter as the inscription on that piece of jewellery might lead one to believe! The brooch is in the form of a bunch of camellias which radiate harmony. I wonder if I show the same sort of harmony in my daily performance of my three roles.

...After a rather difficult start and many vicissitudes, I finally gained admission to the faculty to study theology. Then I married a fellow-student, which did not seem to me incompatible with the sort of life I had chosen... I had to sit my graduation examination while pregnant. I could not hide the fact of my pregnancy as I was expecting sturdy twins. My family and friends were very kind and helpful, and I was able to begin my work and continue my training....

All these factors prevented me from throwing myself 100 per cent into each one of my particular roles. ...Forced to combine several roles at a time in a judicious mixture, ...I cannot identify exclusively with any one of them.

Each of my roles is complete in itself and I am involved in all aspects of them. When I look around me and ask others for advice, I am often told firmly that my role as mother should take precedence. When people speak of motherhood in that way, they are thinking of a commitment which is permanent and unlimited. But I have also heard the same thing said about the work of the pastor! Church authorities

prefer to appoint pastors who are, as they see it, entirely at their disposal.

That sort of absolute commitment is being more and more called into question. It is based on a conception which views the individual as a whole at the beck and call of the community and does not take account of people as individual persons.

The constant switching of role which my life demands has led me to a different idea of what being a whole person is. Being a whole person, which can also be described as 'having an identity', replaces above all that absolute commitment to a particular function. The supreme model of that personal identity is Jesus Christ, who himself had to perform his ministry and remain faithful to it. His very identity is what gives him his almighty power.

As a mother, I have the opportunity of participating in the mystery of creation, which has opened up perspectives for me of how life develops. These perspectives are becoming increasingly important to me and affect how I think as a pastor. Theological study and all that it involved have helped me to find my way in life. And I am happy to share what I have succeeded in discovering in that way with those who have need of it.

This new experience of being a whole person has led me to a new vision of the church: a church which as a human community allows itself to be challenged by the gospel to a solidarity which will lead us into love. Individuals caught up in the process, because it includes all areas of life, find that through that love it encourages and protects their development as whole persons. ...All members... find their own place according to their gifts and talents.

—EPS.

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Deutschland [W. Germany] and Ten Women of C.S.I. Women Fellowship

MISS SUGUNA DEVASUNDARAM*

Bangalore.

Wonderful! Wonderful!

Deutschland is wonderful!

How? How? Tell me.

Oh! the landscape is beautiful

Green, green everywhere!

What a feast to the eye!

Hills and Rivers every where.

What a sight,

The towers of the village churches
pointing to the sky!

My! the ride on the autobahn
speed, speed

Like an airflight but on the land,

How Swift the driver to see to the

left, right, before and behind

Oh, speed, speed everywhere

Time is the master of all.

But, But food must have been
too blunt to swallow

y-e-s, N-o

Pastries of berries, strawberries

And currents were a joy

Chocolates and cakes were welcomed,

But the cold ham and its companions
were our real enemies.

Blush, Blush you must have
blushed at the sight of modern Romance

Oh, No, No, too shy-too shy

Like a catapillar we rolled up

And pretended to be dead to the world.

Why? Why? Why?

Cultured confrontation

Clash of customs and traditions

It is hard, very hard

To digest it all.

How then? How then?

Here to meet, to know, to understand

And to learn advance is not for adversity

Prosperity and promotion

Are not for poverty in reality

Blindness in life results in

life long darkness.

Tell me, Tell me what is life?

The Earth is Lords

Its people are His dear children,

Hence difference between

East and West, North and South

Are on the surface only,

cultural confrontation covers the top only,

Underneath we are all one—

Human being is same every where—

So Let us know Him,

To know Him is life—

Let His pleasures be

our pleasures,

Let us lift ourselves in spiritual growth

To be concerned

over one another

To be moved to action

by one another's burden

So as to have

the earth and its people

Bring Glory to the creator

For ever and ever.

* Miss Suguna Devasundaram is the General Secretary of the C.S.I. Women's fellowship. She is one of the ten women who visited in the West Germany recently.



Christian Conference of Asia—

The Eighth Assembly

MR. T. K. THOMAS

(This extended, multi-part, report on the Eighth Assembly of the Singapore-based Christian Conference of Asia was prepared by T. K. Thomas, a former CCA staff member who is now publications editor at the Geneva-based World Council of Churches. He attended the assembly, in Seoul, 26 June-2 July.)

Background

The assembly met at the Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary of Korea. The assembly theme was 'Jesus Christ sets free to serve'.

CCA assemblies are normally held every four years. Known as the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) until the fifth assembly in 1973, the CCA was constituted by a representative body of Asian church leaders who met at Prapat, Indonesia, in 1957, and formally inaugurated at the assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1959.

In the words of one of its chief architects, the late D. T. Niles of Sri Lanka, behind the formation of the regional conference lay 'the impulse created by the churches coming together in each country, the impulse resulting from the churches of the region finding one another, and the impulse born of the awareness that the churches of Asia belonged with the churches of all the world in the discharge of the Church's mission'.

Its constitution describes the CCA as 'an organ of continuing co-operation among the churches and national Christian bodies in Asia within the framework of the wider ecumenical movement'. The constitution spells out CCA's functions:

- (a) the development of effective Christian response to the challenges of the changing societies of Asia;
- (b) the exploration of opportunities and the promotion of joint action for the fulfilment of the mission of God in Asia and throughout the world;
- (c) the encouragement of Asian contribution to Christian thought, worship and action throughout the world;
- (d) the development of mutual awareness, fellowship and sharing among the churches in the region, and of relationships with other regional conferences and the World Council of Churches;
- (e) the promotion of common study and action in such fields as evangelism, service, social and human development and international relations;
- (f) the stimulation of initiatives and experiments in dynamic Christian living and action.

With a membership of over 90 churches and 15 national councils of churches, CCA's area of operation 'extends from Korea in the north to Pakistan in the west to New Zealand in the east.

CCA assemblies have been major ecumenical events in Asia. The eighth assembly was the first to be held in the northern part of the region. The NCC of Korea and the Korean churches had worked hard for many months preparing for the assembly, and they had also made a substantial financial contribution to the assembly budget.

The seminary where the assembly met is an institution of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. Founded in 1901 in Pyongyang in what is now North Korea, it moved to the south after World War II. It is said to be 'the largest Presbyterian seminary in the world, with a student enrolment of more than 2,000'.

Participating in the eighth assembly were 156 delegates, about 150 fraternal representatives, consultants and others from the Asian region, and a large number of visitors from the host country.

Pre-assembly meetings

Among the pre-assembly events was the Urban Rural Mission People's Forum which brought together 25 people from the region. The Forum involved exposure visits to a mission centre in a poor industrial area, to URM programmes in rural areas, a visit to the Je-II church which conducts Sunday worship services outside a police station, and celebration with the *minjung* of Seoul.

Women from 16 Asian countries participated in the Women's Forum. A statement coming out of the Forum said: 'Asian women have seen and are experiencing not only a worsening of age-old gender and class oppression and exploitation but also the rise of new forms, notably militarization and state violence against women in the countryside, tourist programmes that prostitute our women in the cities, and overseas employment programmes that push even educated women into demeaning service abroad.' All these, the statement said, are legitimized by governments 'backed up by foreign powers and the military'. The church too has a major part in the oppression of women. The forum recommended several programmes of study and action for the CCA.

At a two-day meeting a group of Asian Christian journalists discussed their role in the mission of the Asian churches, and considered the challenges facing them. The group decided to seek the support of the CCA in the formation of an association of Christian journalists in Asia to facilitate

the sharing of information about their situation and experience in various parts of Asia.

Opening worship

The assembly began with a worship service led by the four presidents of the CCA, Mr. Victor Oorjitham (Malaysia), Ms. Jani Cormack (New Zealand), Rev. Canon Alan Chan Chor Chai (Hong Kong) and Rev. David Moses (India), and general secretary Dr. Yap Kim Hao.

Before the service, assembly participants were welcomed by Dr. Kim So-Young, general secretary of the NCC, Korea. The Korean church, he said, is among the youngest in Asia, but it has grown rapidly, both in number and influence. He hoped that the meeting of the assembly in Seoul would further the solidarity among Asian churches, and contribute to the closer participation of the Korean churches in the ecumenical fellowship.

The preacher at the service was Canon Hone Kaa, a Maori Anglican from New Zealand, a country which used to be known as Aotearoa, as he pointedly reminded assembly participants. The sermon was based on two scripture passages—Ezekiel 34:1-16 and John 10:1-16—both of which abound in the imagery of sheep and shepherds. He contrasted the 'shepherds' who enslaved people, in New Zealand and many other countries in the region, with 'the good shepherd' who is also 'the gate of the sheep'. The sermon was followed by an interpretative dance illustrating the theme of enslavement and liberation.

Reports

The CCA presidium functions collegially. The report of the four presidents was presented by Canon Alan Chan of Hong Kong. After briefly surveying the Asian scene, the report dealt with the church's struggle for survival. In most Asian countries, the churches are small minorities, in many cases identified with the erstwhile imperial powers. Because the churches have not been able to root themselves in Asian cultures, they are often viewed with suspicion.

Whenever and wherever the churches identify themselves with the struggles of people for political participation and economic justice, their survival is threatened. Religious and ideological intolerance and the steady secularisation of societies also present serious problems to the churches. Christian communities in Asia are under the constant pressure either to conform to dominant ideologies or to escape into private piety.

The Asian churches are struggling to achieve a measure of identity, the report said. Can national identity and Christian identity go together? How may Christian people be awakened to a sense of their cultural rootage? How should mission be understood in their diverse contexts? These are among the questions Christian people in Asia are asking themselves.

In all these areas there are signs of hope—in terms of increasing Christian participation in the struggles of people, a new appreciation of the cultures of people and a more integrated understanding of evangelism. The assembly theme, through its emphasis on freedom and service, urges Christians all over Asia to radically rethink their role in society and to affirm that in Jesus Christ they are 'set free and in him too (they) accept the bondage to serve'. The report closed with comments on the present programme structure of the CCA and the current imbalance in the representation by member churches at assemblies. United and uniting churches, it was observed, 'are particularly disadvantaged under the present system'.

The general secretary's report addressed itself to an assessment of the ecumenical scene in the Asian region. 'An important consideration for convening the assembly

in Seoul" he said, 'is to express our solidarity with the Korean churches and the Korean *minjung* in their struggles for the democratization of their society and the reunification of their divided country'. The delegates had come eager to learn from the 'rapid church growth' phenomenon in Korea. Christianity had not come to Korea in the wake of colonialism, as it did in many Asian countries. In fact it had come to oppose Japanese imperial power around the turn of the century. 'Historically the Christian movement in Korea was identified with the nationalist movement from the very beginning', and this explains why 'its influence in society far outweighs its numbers'.

The report described some of 'the current captivities' under which Asian people suffer—such as poverty, authoritarian and military governments, violent internal conflicts as in India and Sri Lanka, the marginalization of minority communities like the Dalits in India and the Koreans in Japan, and the social problems brought about by modernization. The 'servanthood of the church' needs to be lived out amidst these realities. Neither an otherworldly stance nor a privatized faith can address the problems facing Asia. The church also must be set free 'to be in continuous dialogue with living Asian traditions, cultures and values'.

But is the CCA no longer committed to the unity of churches? How does the CCA relate to the Roman Catholic Church? How will it promote dialogue with other faiths and ideologies? These were some of the questions raised by participants when the reports were being discussed.

A partial answer to the question of CCA-Roman Catholic relations was provided when Cardinal Stephen Kim of Korea greeted the delegates. He looked forward to the day when the Roman Catholic church and the CCA could be part of the same ecumenical fellowship. The church, he said, is called to mediate to the people of Asia the vision of the fullness of God in Jesus Christ. There was a time when Christians witnessed to that vision through their activities in the fields of education and health care. Today they are challenged to follow the example of Jesus Christ who washed the feet of his disciples. He hoped the assembly and the CCA would be a sign of hope for the future.

Niles Memorial Lectures

D. T. Niles died in 1971. The CCA assembly which met two years later instituted the Niles Memorial Lectures to commemorate his many services to world Christianity in general and to Asian ecumenism in particular. These lectures have been a feature of CCA assemblies since then. Within the framework of the assembly theme, they are meant to provide theological interpretations of Asian realities as these are perceived from time to time.

The first Niles lecture at the eighth assembly was given by Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India. It covered a wide range of concerns, all of them crucial for the understanding of the Asian situation and the church's role in the region. The Metropolitan stressed the need to liberate the Asian mind 'from its captivity to the European Enlightenment'—, and explained why science and technology had to be freed from the captivity of the military-industrial-banking complex. He dealt with the understanding of the Christian faith—and the role of Christian people in the context of Asian religions, of the poverty and injustice in Asian countries, and of Asian political economics. In the concluding part of his lecture the Metropolitan suggested the outlines of a theology of freedom in community.

The second lecture, by Dr. Eka Dharmaputera of Indonesia, was in the form of a testimony. It was based, firmly and deliberately, on the Indonesian experience. In order to serve people, the lecturer said, we should first be set free from our own ignorance of people. 'We speak of people's liberation and people's rights. But are they really theirs?' he asked. We need to be set free from our religious bondage as well. In Asia, the speaker said, 'the time has come to think of oneself as human person first, as Muslim/Buddhist/ Hindu/Christian later'. The Indonesian Christians are participants in the life of the nation, not spectators and they seek to be *positive, critical creative, and realistic* in their life and witness.

In the third lecture Ms Lidy Naepil, a young person from the Philippines deeply involved in the struggles of people, shared with assembly participants a number of stories of persons who were victims of 'the evil structures and demonic forces that operate' in her country. She also told stories of people who witnessed to the liberating power of Christ in such situations. She described the assembly theme as an 'affirmation of the Word alive and at work in the present, for Asia is not only a land of suffering, it is also a land of struggles'.

The last lecture was by Professor David Kwang-sun Suh, of Ewha Women's University, Seoul. The speaker began with a reference to the assembly logo. The work of a Korean artist, it has the cross superimposed on the mask of a character in a popular folk dance which celebrates the theme of the liberation of religion—and of people. It is excellent entertainment, but it also serves an iconoclastic function. In it 'the *minjung* are tearing down the Buddhist religion that has been lording over their minds and spirit. Much of Christianity as a religion deserves the same treatment. Although we have done away with rote memorization of the Confucian letters and Buddhist sutras, now we cling to the letter and proof texts of the Bible'. The mask with the cross on it is a symbol, concluded the speaker, which points to the suffering servant in Isaiah and the role to which, as followers of Christ, Asian Christians are called.

New general secretary

The Rev. Park Sang Jung, 55, a member of the Korea Evangelical (Holiness) Church, was elected CCA general secretary. He is currently one of the two CCA associate general secretaries, having joined the CCA staff in 1981.

Mr. Park has his theological education at the Ashbury Theological Seminary and the Princeton Theological Seminary, USA. For a period he served on the staff of the NCC Korea. He was an executive secretary of the World Council of Churches for about ten years, first in the Youth Department and then with the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. From 1978 to 1981 he was an ecumenical associate with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), USA.

Mr. Park is married, with three sons. The NCCs of Japan, Korea, and Sri Lanka, and the Australian Council of Churches had nominated Mr. Park for the post. Bishop John Victor Samuel of the (United) Church of Pakistan was also a candidate. The committee submitted both names to the delegates. Voting was by secret ballot; of the 152 cast, Mr. Park had 91.

Mr Park is the fourth CCA general secretary. Dr. D. T. Niles was the first. He was succeeded by U. Kyaw Than (Burma). Dr. Yap Kim Hao (Malaysia) was elected to the post at the assembly which met in Singapore in 1973.

—EPS

Asia Meeting looks at Inter-Faith Dialogue and Theological Education

KUALA LUMPUR (EPS/T. K. Thomas)—Organized by the Geneva-based World Council of Churches, a consultation was held here (19-25 June) to explore implications of inter-faith dialogue for theological education. The first of its kind, it pointed to a new phase both in inter-faith dialogue and theological education.

Meant primarily for the Asian region, it brought together about 20 theological teachers from 10 Asian countries, plus consultants from Europe and North America, and some students and teachers from Seminari Theoloji Malaysia, the six-year-old, united theological school in Malaysia. Participants came from 18 theological seminaries.

The meeting was not an exercise in inter-faith dialogue. Nor was it an attempt to discuss the theological implications of dialogue itself. Its focus was more specific; it sought to draw out the implications of dialogue for the teaching of theology in general and in the area of ministerial formation in particular.

That the two are closely interrelated, in Asia especially, is part of the problem facing theological education in the region. Church expectations of theological schools are too often only in terms of the training of ministers, and the ministers are expected to serve the members of the church and seldom encouraged to take seriously their pluralist situation.

Among other constraints on theological education in the region are the denominationalism and conservatism of many churches and their preoccupation with their own identity in minority situations. But the contexts vary from country to country. In some lands, Christians feel isolated and oppressed. Others live where inter-religious conflicts have flared up with disastrous consequences. Some have little actual possibility of inter-faith dialogue; others have well-established patterns of inter-faith activity, symbolized by the presence throughout the consultation of a Hindu professor who teaches in a South Indian seminary.

Still, all those present recognized that however individual situations differ, religious pluralism is a basic reality of the Asian scene to which theological education must respond. This religious pluralism, moreover, is a central aspect of the demand for economic and social development in Asian countries and the search for justice and liberation. It is here, where Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Confucianists may vastly outnumber Christians, that the church lives and works and prays for the Kingdom to come.

Lectures and responses were given on several themes: teaching theology in a multi-faith context, towards a new approach to teaching religion in seminaries, implications of dialogue for teaching mission and evangelism, and ministerial formation in a multi-faith parish. It asked regional theological associations and member schools to continue discussing these issues.

In addition, the consultation urged that textbooks used in seminaries be carefully examined in the light of inter-religious dialogue. It recommended the adoption of new methods, such as team teaching, in order to ensure integration of approach between teachers of different theological disciplines. It urged studies of the 'image of the Christian faith' in other faith communities and the investigation of how Christian doctrines are understood by people of other faiths. It also recommended sharing 'successful attempts in creative inter-religious dialogue in the context of theological education.'

—EPS

KARNATAKA NORTHERN DIOCESE

RETREAT CUM CONFERENCE FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS

14th-16th June, 1985



From left to right :

Rev. Paul J. Kattebennur ; Mr. C. J. Sakkari ; Rt. Rev. V. P. Dandin ;
Mr. Bhaskar A. Bhasme and Dr. Samuel Issmer.

A Retreat cum Conference for the child care workers of the Diocese was organised by the Diocese in the Retreat cum Lay Training Centre at Dharwad from 14th to 16th June, 1985. The main Theme of the retreat was '*The Call and Commitment.*' The Rt. Rev. Vasanth P. Dandin Bishop of the Diocese inaugurated the retreat and conference. In his Inaugural address the Bishop emphasised stating that the children are important and keynote in our service as Jesus loved, cared and blessed the children. Shri Bhaskar A. Bhasme, Director CSI-CCC and Dr. Samuel Issmer, Principal Training Centre for Wardens were our resource guests. They spoke very effectively and in a more practical aspect of the theme. The messages and speeches were challenging and heart touching ones. Rev. Paul J. Kattebennur and Shri C. J. Sakkari Convener of the Boarding Homes gave a preliminary talk. The Bible studies led by the Rt. Rev. V. P. Dandin, Bishop were thought provoking.

70 delegates of the child care workers together with the honorary Managers of the institutions from all over the diocese have attended. The retreat and the conference had a unique experience of being together enjoying fellow-

ship and sharing their experiences in different situations in the ministry. All have taken part in the Holy Communion Service in All Saints' Church, Dharwad. The Diocesan Bishop conducted the Holy Communion Service. The morning devotions and singing were leading to the theme of the retreat.

There was a plenary session kept in the programme to discuss the various problems and issues which are associated with the child care ministry. The Director CSI-CCC was apt in his declarations.

The cultural activities and video shows on the child care ministry were the highlights of the evening programmes. The participants expressed their desire to organise such retreats and conferences frequently.

The Valedictory Service was conducted by The Rt. Rev. V. P. Dandin, Bishop Mr. C. J. Sakkari proposed vote of thanks to all.

REV. PAUL J. KATTEBENNUR
Director.

[AUGUST 1985]

Unfinished Agenda—an autobiography. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, published by the World Council of Churches Geneva.

Perhaps this is more of a personal response to Bishop Newbigin's autobiography, rather than a review of it. It is certainly appropriately entitled, for the author has faced many agendas in his various ministries: his life has also been a full agenda. Although it is written by Lesslie Newbigin, it is a book about both the Newbigin's, for without Helen, as he himself says, his life would have been infinitely poorer. The love and joy of their marriage constantly comes through these pages and that story is, in itself, an inspiration. It was a marriage and a family of deep sharing, based on the knowledge that Christ held them in His hands, yet over the years they have known many struggles and because of Lesslie's ministry many times of separation.

What strikes the reader most forcibly is the fact that his life has constantly revolved around two basic realities. The inner search for a life of prayer coupled to compassionate action. Recently, Lord Macleod, the founder of the Iona Community published a book of his prayers. That book is entitled, 'The whole Earth Shall Cry—Glory.' This seems to be the theme of the Newbigin's spiritual journey. It was a 'journey into joy'—but especially in his ecumenical work it could not have been without many frustrating moments. The unity of the church—or rather the search for that unity, needs patience and understanding of a very high order. It also needs a sense of humour—especially when trying to win over stubborn Anglican bishops to the merits of the CSI in its early days.

His experience of Christ has, over the years, led him into many different situations and into a constant reflection concerning both the mission of the church and the unity of God's people. His own compassion for others is very evident, but he speaks clearly about the failings of the church both in India and elsewhere. All through his life he has been both a realist and an optimist—but never in any easy or superficial way. Prayer sensitive evangelism, the search for lasting Christian unity, concern with injustice, relations with those of other faiths, but above all a deep longing to be as faithful as possible to Scriptural revelation, are the roots of his compassion and action. These multiple concerns and challenges marked his early years in the Student Christian Movement: his work in Kanchi; his years as bishop in Madurai; his service with the World Council of Churches in Geneva; his nine years as bishop in Madras, and these recent years when he has been working in Birmingham.

His chapters relating to India should be read by all those who are concerned in any way with the future of the church in this land. But his Indian experience has also much to teach the whole church. His trenchant judgements on many of the evils within the Indian church—such as caste politics and power seeking—are not made in a spirit of bitterness, but cut of a desire to see the church in India become a more faithful instrument of Christ's designs. That is why we should think long and hard about many of his observations. Let me give one example.

After he became bishop in Madurai, he was asked if he could help to raise funds for Lady Doak College then in its infancy. This is what he wrote, at that time, to the Secretary of the American Mission Board.:

'Whether the Christian Church as a matter of fact ought to be running colleges like this is another question. There are large chunks of time when I

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think our members ought to be getting their education running revolutionary cells preparing the way for a pukka agrarian revolution. But that is not the way we have come so far. As Christian colleges go, I think this is a good one. But all this runs back again to the question whether we are all too completely tied up with the western bourgeois set-up, and what the future of that set-up is in India.'

In 1951, when he wrote that letter, the church situation in China was undergoing massive upheaval, and he believed that the Chinese experience must have a lesson for the Indian church which was so linked to foreign money and foreign connections. Whether we have understood these lessons of history any more clearly 40 years later, is extremely hard to say. Is our concern in the Indian church, more directed to the exploited than 30 years ago? Are we more concerned, than then, with our neighbours of other faiths? Are we more aware, in a caring sense, of the world beyond India? Are we more committed to evangelism and to the struggles against injustice than when the Church of South India was formed in 1947? Have we still a pressing vision for the unity of all God's people? Have we a deeper life of prayer? Are we concerned with theological reflection and the renewal of worship? Are our young people in the churches prepared to give their life in service to Christ? These are all as vital questions for us today as they were with the CSI in its early days.

Bishop Newbigin has many other penetrating observations about the church in India: about its structures; about its style of functioning; about its methods of evangelism; about its theological base; about its ministry about the role of lay men and women; about its relationship to overseas donor agencies; about its dialogue with other faiths; about the ministry of bishops; about urban mission. The list is long, but one fact is certain—the life and work of the Newbigin's and the witness of the Protestant church in India during these last 50 years, are inter-related. Their struggles and hopes have been the struggles and joys of the church.

One point he keeps making, and it is something which relates to the church everywhere. It is this. Bishop Newbigin is certain 'that the health of the body depends upon the health of the smallest units'. Or to put it another way: the real life of a diocese depends upon the degree of vitality to be found in the local churches. This truth as he says, applies all over the world but it is a sad fact that we have often lost sight of it within our Indian context where we are inclined to place the importance and life of the diocese (in an administrative sense) above the life and spiritual vitality of the local congregation. So, in this sense, Lesslie Newbigin indicates clearly where the fundamental life of the CSI should be located. It is a wise perception.

From their student days, the Newbigin's have seen the mission of the church and its unity as inseparable, and from that commitment came their life-long association with ecumenical bodies and from the late 1940's with the WCC. He reflects on his years with the IMC and with the WCC and recounts endless journeys across the face of the earth in his capacity as a servant of these agencies. In this area, Lesslie Newbigin's story is also the history of much of the

ecumenical movement in these last 50 years. It is a complex story and as he himself notes, the search for unity is today not a high priority among many denominations within the Protestant family. The emphasis is elsewhere. The time and energy which he has given to the realisation of an ecumenical vision is astonishing, as is his list of papers and book.

Although I personally am attracted to the vision which the WCC has articulated since its inception, I have to admit that I find Lesslie Newbigin's recollections in this important area less moving than those which cover his Indian experiences. But for the Newbigin's two parts—local involvements and the world church—cannot be separated, and his clarity of thinking on many WCC issues will stimulate much discussion. Throughout his long involvement with the IMC and WCC, he has constantly expressed the need for a sensitive evangelism rooted in knowledge of Scripture and in living prayer. This never means the 'cheap evangelism' of which we see so much today, but that kind of evangelism which believes that every aspect of the human experience comes under the grace and forgiveness of Christ in whom all things cohere.

In the last pages of his book, Bishop Newbigin draws our attention to a fact of our present world situation which he has expounded in many of his recent speeches and in his recent book, 'The Other Side of 1984.' It concerns the disintegration of our modern secular culture which finds its roots in the West. He writes:

'I do not now believe that the "modern" secular culture of the post-Enlightenment West has an assured future. It seems to me to show all the signs of disintegration. I look back with real penitence when, as a missionary in India, I censured some things and commended others on grounds which—I now realize—were not evangelical but merely cultural.'

His final words are both inspiring and filled with that kind of understanding which has characterised the ministry of both Helen and Lesslie Newbigin. These words come from the heart and they speak to the heart: but they also speak to our wounded world of profound hope.

'But at the end I return to the beginning, to the vision which was given me during that distressing night in the miner's camp in South Wales. I still see the cross of Jesus as the one place in all the history of human culture where there is a final dealing with the ultimate mysteries of sin and forgiveness of bondage, and freedom, of conflict and peace, of death and life. Although there is so much that is puzzling, so much that I simply do not understand and so much that is unpredictable, I find here—as I have again and again

found during the past fifty years—a point from which one can take one's bearings and a light in which one can walk, however stumblingly. I know that the guiding star will remain and that, that light will shine till death and in the end. And that is enough.

REV. PETER W. MILLAR

NEWS from the DIOCESES—(Continued)

MEDAK DIOCESE

BISHOP PREMASAGAR BEREAVED

Bishop Victor Premasagar's father late Peddi Ratnam retired evangelist in the Diocese of Medak passed away on June 26, 1985 in Hyderabad. He was buried in the Cathedral compound, Medak. He was 84.

Peddi Ratnam served as a teacher in a village school, later, teacher at the Evangelists Training School, Medak and, for many years, as an evangelist in the village congregations in the diocese of Medak.

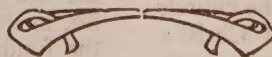
Bishop Premasagar, his three sisters and brother and their families need our prayers.

KANYAKUMARI DIOCESE

The following five qualified and selected persons have received their ordination on 26th May 1985 at CSI Church, Martandam. The Bishop, Rt. Rev. G. Christdhas conducted the main service and ordained them. Rev. M. I. Kesari was the preacher. More than 1,500 people participated in the service. Rev. A. Duraimony, the Presbyterian in-Charge at Martandam and the Church Committee made all the arrangements for the sacred service.

The names of the ordained persons:

1. Rev. A. Yesudhas.
2. Rev. T. Renjit Singh.
3. Rev. B. Justin Devadhasan.
4. Rev. Y. David Ganamony.
5. Rev. J. Solomon.



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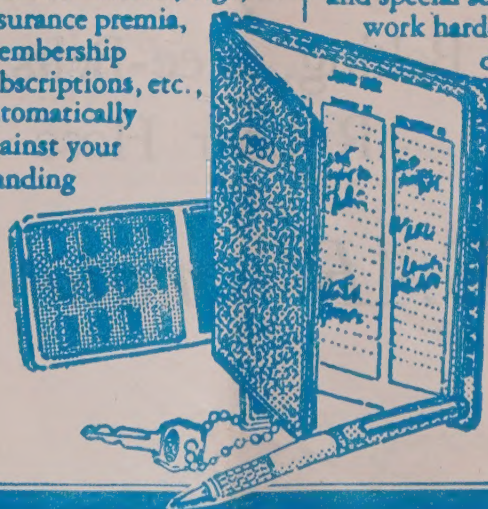
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